

REMARKS

Claims 1-7 are pending in the application, with claim 1 being the sole independent claim. No new matter has been added. Based on the following remarks, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all outstanding rejections and objections and that they be withdrawn.

Allowable Claims

Claims 2 and 3 were indicated to be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In light of the remarks below with regard to independent claim 1, Applicants assert that independent claim 1 is allowable, and thus respectfully request that the objection to claims 2 and 3 be withdrawn and that these claims be passed to allowance.

Claim Objections

The Office Action objected to claims 4-7 as being in improper form because a multiple dependent claim cannot depend from another multiple dependent claim. However, Applicants submit that the claims, as amended in the Preliminary Amendment filed May 3, 2006, do not include multiple dependent claims. The currently pending claims, as amended on May 3, 2006, are shown in the listing of claims, beginning on page 3. Thus, the currently pending claims do not include any multiple dependent claims, much less a multiple dependent claim that depends from another multiple dependent claim. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the objection to the claims be reconsidered and withdrawn and that claims 4-7 be passed to allowance.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 1-3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

It appears that the Office Action has overlooked the Preliminary Amendment, which was filed May 3, 2006. The Preliminary Amendment includes amendments to the claims, which are believed to remedy the Examiner's concerns.

In claim 1, the phrase "or similar" was removed in the Preliminary Amendment.

Claim 2 was amended in the Preliminary Amendment to reflect that the switching means are related to the switching means already claimed.

Claim 3 was amended in the Preliminary Amendment to remove the phrase "in particular" and to reflect that the switching means are related to the switching means already claimed. The "data bus" is recited in claim 2, from which claim 3 depends, thereby providing antecedent basis. For instance, claim 2 recites, "...wherein said connecting means comprise a data bus...."

Applicants therefore respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, and that all pending claims be passed to allowance.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claim 1 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,894,236 to Chappuis (hereinafter "Chappuis"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Independent claim 1 recites, among other features, *allocation means adapted to allocate to said control signals particular controlling functions with reference to said appliances.*

It appears that the Office Action relies on platform 12 of Chappuis to allegedly teach the allocation means as set forth in Applicants' claim 1. For instance, the Office Action contends that the platform in which the pedal switches of Chappuis are placed allocates where the control signals are going for controlling a particular function. Office Action, p. 3. However, upon inspection, platform 12 of Chappuis does not allocate where the control signals are going any more than a plug

receiver 18 or a power line 13 “allocates” where the control signals are going. To the contrary, platform 12 merely “acts as a rack or a holder for supporting and separating pedals for operating surgical tools that are marketed and sold with a pedal.” Chappuis, Col. 5, lines 5-7.

The allocation means, as set forth in Applicants’ claim 1, is adapted to allocate to the control signals particular controlling functions. For instance, the specification of the present patent application explains that, in the allocation means, a particular control function, designed for particular functions of the appliances or groups thereof, can be allocated to each switching means. “In this way the informational content ... of the signals produced by the switching means can be changed without altering the switching means themselves,” making it possible to change the function of already installed control devices. Present patent application, paragraph [0007].

Thus, the allocation means, as set forth in Applicants’ claim 1, is capable of allocating to the control signals particular controlling functions, which may differ from those designated for the already installed control devices. Whereas, platform 12 of Chappuis is incapable of allocating to the control signals particular controlling functions, and instead merely holds pedals, which control surgical tools using control signals corresponding to functions that cannot be changed. Thus, platform 12 of Chappuis is not adapted to allocate to the control signals particular controlling functions, as suggested in the Office Action.

For at least these reasons, Applicants submit that independent claim 1 is distinguishable over Chappuis. Claims 2-7 are also distinguishable over Chappuis for at least the same reasons as those set forth above with respect to independent claim 1, and further in view of their own respective features.

Applicants therefore respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102, and that claims 1-7 be passed to allowance.


Information Disclosure Statement

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's consideration of the documents listed on the Form PTO/SB/08/a that accompanied the Information Disclosure Statement filed May 3, 2006.

In view of the above remarks, Applicants believe the pending application is in condition for allowance.

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Respectfully submitted,

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